

REMARKS

The foregoing amendment and remarks which follow are responsive to the non-final Office Action mailed October 31, 2002 in relation to the above-identified patent application. In that Office Action, Applicants were requested to change the title of the present invention to provide a complete and detailed description of the invention. Applications were further directed to update the status of the co-pending applications referenced in the application.

With respect to the substantive examination of the claims, Claims 1-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Bergh et al. (i.e., United States Patent Number 6,112,186) in view of Feldman (i.e. United States Patent Number 6,154,741). No other issues were presented.

By this amendment, Applicant has cancelled all of the pending claims in favor of new Claims 24-36 to more clearly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention, as well as to distinguish the same from the prior art references. As stated more fully below, rejection of the claims in view of the Bergh and Feldman references under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) cannot now be maintained in light of the amendments made herein.

In this respect, the present invention is directed to methods for organizing a website structure which includes the steps of providing multiple home pages dedicated to the teams and individual members of an *organized sports league* and selectively controlling the access to such websites. More specifically, the methods of the present invention comprise providing a first personal home page for a team member registered with the website, providing a second personalized page for a team with which the

registered member is a part of, providing a third home page for a second team, allowing the registered member to have access to the personalized pages of the first and second teams, and empowering the member to selectively control access to his or her personal page. In this respect, the personalized home page for the individual team member defines a first community area, whereas the home pages dedicated to the first and second teams define a second community area.

In further refinements of the invention, access by third parties (i.e., other players) to the home page of the individual member is restricted, but can be obtained to the extent the registered member invites other registered members to visit his or her personal site. In further refinements in the invention, such invitation will be reciprocal in nature and will allow the inviting registered member to access the sites of those who accept his or her invitation. Likewise, the inviting member can invite non-members who are not registered members to access the site and ultimately become members within the website structure.

In more expansive refinements of the present invention, it is contemplated that the methods will additionally include providing a third community area, such as a league having its own dedicated home page, that will be accessible to all teams and members registered with the site, and will provide further relevant information regarding inter-league play between the registered teams within the website structure. Still further, such methods may include providing a system administrator operative to selectively control access to all sites of the website, as well as permit or deny access to various community areas thereof. It is especially contemplated that the methods of the present invention will be oriented towards establishing website structures for children and youth sporting events to thus enable an inter-sports network to be established.

The methods embodied in newly submitted claims 24-35 are clearly distinguishable from the cited prior art references. Specifically, Bergh et al. is directed to systems for collecting a number of subjecting ratings given to items by users, and further allows users to provide ratings wherever and whenever it is convenient for the user to provide the same. Column 2, lines 9-12. In this respect, the system is operative to generate and disseminate rating information generated by its users to be used to recommend items and locate individuals having similar tastes to facilitate the ability of such individuals to communicate with each other. Column 2, lines 16-20. Indeed, Bergh et al. teaches the use of a conventional alphabetic scale ("A" to "F") or numerical scale (1-10) in order to rate items such as movies or restaurants to thus enable the users to make an informed decision. (Column 4, lines 35-38; Column 3, lines 25-41; and Column 1, lines 33-37.)

The Feldman reference is directed to systems and methods for controlling access to resources for a computer network. Column 1, lines 17-23; Column 2, lines 47-51; and Column 3, lines 41-48). In this regard, such systems and methods are applicable for use in controlling access to electronic publishing, message forwarding, transaction authorization, and database access. (Column 4, lines 41-47).

Neither reference, however, either alone or in combination teach or suggest the present invention as claimed. In this respect, both the Bergh et al. and Feldman references are completely devoid of teaching any type of method for establishing a sports-oriented league website structure. Along these lines, although the present Office Action claimed that Bergh et al. "teaches a topical area of interest such as sports activities" at Column 1,

lines 28-32, the same is inaccurate. For the Examiner's consideration, Column 1, lines 24-31 of Bergh et al. are reproduced:

“The amount of information, as well as the number of goods and services, available to individuals is increasing exponentially. This increase in items and information is occurring across all domaines, e.g. sound recordings, restaurants, movies, World Wide Web pages, clothing stores, etc. An individual attempting to find useful information, or to decide between competing goods and services, is often faced with a bewildering selection of sources and choices.”

Such passage does not teach any application regarding sports, let alone methods for establishing website structures designed to facilitate information between leagues, teams and individual team members. In fact, a search of both the Bergh et al. and Feldman references fail to provide any teaching or suggestion in relation to the methods of the present invention directed to informational website structure organization directed to teams, leagues, team players and the like, and much less for enhancing the enjoyment and increasing participation in such activities.

As is well-known, the Examiner bears the burden of establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness based upon the prior art and such burden can only be satisfied by showing some objective teaching in the prior art. In re Fritch, 972 F.2d 1260, 23 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1780 (Fed. Cir. 1992); In re Deuel, 51 F.3d 1552 34 U.S.P.Q. 2d, 1210 (Fed Cir. 1995). In the absence of a proper *prima facie* case of obviousness, an Applicant who complies with all other statutory requirements is entitled to a patent. In re Oetiker, 977

F2d 1443, 24 U.S.P.Q. 2d, 1443 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the prior art is inapplicable and cannot be relied upon for rejecting the claims as presented herein.

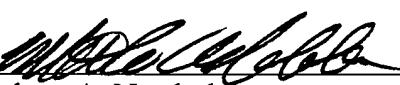
Accordingly, based on the foregoing Applicants respectfully submit that the claims newly submitted herein are clearly patentable over the cited prior art references and in condition for immediate allowance. Early notice to that effect is respectfully requested. To the extent the Examiner has any questions, requires additional information or has any suggestions to resolve any outstanding issues that may exist, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' counsel at the number listed below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

If an additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account Number 19-4330.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/31/03

By: 

Matthew A. Newboles
Registration No. 36,224
STETINA BRUNDA GARRED & BRUCKER
75 Enterprise, Suite 250
Aliso Viejo, California 92656
Telephone: (949) 855-1246

"VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE."

Claims 1-23 have been cancelled

The following new claims have been added:

24. (New) A method for organizing a web site structure related to at least one first team registered with the web site, at least one member of said at least one first team registered with said web site, and at least one second team registered with said website, the method comprising the steps:
 - a) providing a first personalized home page for said at least one registered team member and imparting through said first personalized home page information pertaining to said member and at least one first team registered with said web site;
 - b) providing a second personalized home page for said at least one first team and imparting through said second personalized home page information and schedules regarding said at least one first team;
 - c) providing a third personalized home page dedicated to said at least one second team and imparting through said third personalized home page information and schedules regarding said at least one second team; and
 - d) providing said at least one registered team member access to said home pages of said first and second teams and empowering said member to selectively controllable access to said home page of said member.
25. (New) The method of Claim 24 wherein in step a), said first personalized home page of said at least one member comprises a first community area; and wherein in

steps b) and c), said second and third personalized home pages of said at least one first team and said at least one second team comprise a second community area.

26. (New) The method of Claim 24 further comprising the step e):

providing a fourth home page dedicated to a league registered with said web site within which said at least one first team and said at least one second team are participants, said at least one registered team member being provided access to said fourth home page..

27. (New) The method of Claim 26 wherein in step e), said fourth home page for said league comprises a third community area.

28. (New) The method of Claim 25 wherein in step a), said first community area comprises a plurality of personalized home pages created for dedicated ones of said registered members of said at least one first team.

29. (New) The method of Claim 28 wherein step d) further comprises empowering each respective registered team member of said at least one first team to selectively control access to each respective one of said personalized home pages.

30. (New) The method of Claim 29 wherein in step d), access to a personalized home page of a registered member by an entity other than said registered member is provided by an invitation extended to said entity by said registered member.

31. (New) The method of Claim 30 wherein in step d), the registered members of said first community area can send out invitations to other registered members to view their personal home pages in said first community area.

32. The method of Claim 31 wherein in step d), each respective one of said invitations carries a reciprocal invitation for the member sending said invitation to be able to view the personal information of the registered member receiving said invitation.

33. The method of Claim 30 wherein in step d), the registered member can invite a non-member not belonging to said at least one first team or said at least one second team to become a registered member of said web site.

34. The method of Claim 30 further comprising the step:

- e) providing a central administrator having selective control to resend an invitation.

35. The method of Claim 34 wherein in step e), said central administrator can assign access capability to community areas for a registered member.

36. The web site structure of Claim 24 wherein in step a), said at least one registered user is a child and wherein in steps b) and c), said at least one first team and said at least one second team comprise youth sports teams.